

"Remember that you have only one soul; that you have only one death to die; that you have only one life, which is short and must be lived by you alone; and that there is only one glory which is eternal. If you do this, there will be many things about which you care nothing." - St. Teresa of Avila

This week the presidential conventions begin. We are entering a new realm of political frenzy, and it will be tempting to be immersed in it. The temptation is for us to define both ourselves and others by political views. As if by knowing how someone else is going to vote means we know anything about their true self. As we heard yesterday in the gospel reading, even Jesus couldn't see the Canaanite woman clearly the first time. It took at least a second and maybe a third look for him to see her as a "woman of great faith."

St. Augustine wrote, "God is the only reality and we are only real insofar as we are in God and God is in us." Yes, we must accept our responsibilities as citizens, and yes, we are called to exercise our civic duty which includes being informed about the issues of the day as well as actually voting. Yes to all of that.

But let us first and always anchor ourselves in the way, the truth and the life of our Lord. "There is only one glory which is eternal." This is important for several reasons.

First is just our sanity. The people of this country are not Republicans and Democrats; they are children of God, made in God's image just like you and me. "God is the only reality and we are real insofar as we are in God and God is in us." When we meet/experience another person and our quick definition of them comes to mind, think again, feel again, look again. If we still see them only as a label, then do what we can to be "in God" and have "God in us." I mean when I

get upset because someone doesn't behave or believe or speak or act as I think they should, my first reaction is to label them and thereby discount them. As Anne Lamont says "Isn't it convenient that God loves the same people that we do?"

However, our calling is not to label the world, but to be agents of God's loving the world and thereby transforming the world.

This world, this country is in sore need of grace and mercy and forgiveness. We have enough division and acrimony and labels. Therefore, this is the moment for the Church to be the Church. Who else is in the Communion business? But we cannot give away what we do not have. "God is the only reality and we are real insofar as we are in God and God is in us." Therefore, let us be disciples by embracing the disciplines that equip us for the work of reconciliation. Let us take on practices that will open our hearts and minds and lives to God so that we might be "real insofar as we are in God and God is in us." Then let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

This is our moment. Let us do our work.